

A U S T R A L I A N
G A R D E N
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Richard Ailken

EDITORIAL

This issue of *Australian Garden History* comprises papers given at the 1993 national conference of the Australian Garden History Society. The conference, hosted by the Tasmanian Branch, was entitled 'Cottage Gardens and Villages'. The printed papers commence with Margaret Scott's address for the opening of the exhibition 'From Village to Vase – The Art of the Cottage Garden', a display at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery which was organised in conjunction with the AGHS conference. British guest Ethne Clarke provides the backbone of the issue with her keynote address 'The English Cottage Garden'. This paper is complemented by the two remaining contributions. The first, by Kim Fletcher, looks at the use of herbs, a key horticultural and botanic aspect of cottage gardens. The second paper is by Peter Cuffley and here he briefly examines the Australian cottage garden and draws on the English background provided by our keynote speaker.

The conference was a resounding success – intellectually, socially and financially. We hope that the selection of papers presented in this special issue revive pleasant memories for conference delegates, and also enlighten those members who were not able to attend.

Tasmanian Branch

The Australian Garden History Society would like to acknowledge that the Tasmanian Branch contributed \$1,000 towards the publication of this issue.

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Peter Cuffley works as a consultant on garden conservation and design. He has published widely on Australian gardens and traditional Australian houses.

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Cover: Cottage gardening traditions live on at Blaise Hamlet; see article on page 5.

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history—horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

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FROM VILLAGE TO VASE

Exhibition Opening Address

Gardening, historical research and painting have long been three of my principal interests. Here at the Tasmanian Art Gallery and Museum, in *From Village to Vase – The Art of the Cottage Garden*, the three are brought into an elegant synthesis. These drawings and paintings give us a fresh insight into the history of Australian gardens. They also show how the art of the painter or sketcher can complement and, in a sense, preserve the art of the gardener, and beyond this, they point up the affinities between gardening and painting or drawing. As Amanda Beresford remarks in her introduction to the exhibition catalogue:

Gardeners do with growing things what artists do, at least some of the time, with their medium, be it paint, water-colour, pastel or pencil: transform and enhance the viewer's perception of the world by the interplay of colour, light, texture, form and structure organised within a defined space ... a garden, no less than a painting, is nature put in order by the human hand.

No doubt there are many expert gardeners who have created in their gardens harmonious vistas, balanced compositions of form and colour as beautiful as William Porden Kay's study of the garden at Syndal. I find that reflection and the evidence of many of the pictures in the exhibition very heartening, but I have to confess that, up to this point, my attempts to restore the garden of the Federation house in which I now live have not been very much like painting or maybe a bit like painting blindfold on greasy paper in a tearing gale. Kind people give me cuttings. I stick the sprigs in a bucket and forget what they are, so that where I planned a splash of crimson I end up with a clump of orange. Things die. Snails eat them. Others

spring up and sprawl all over the place. The general effect is, to say the least, haphazard.

The gardens and flower arrangements on the walls here are not like that. They are, it seems, as their owners wished them to be. There are no snails, no aphids. The petals of the blossoms are not gnawed by earwigs. But then, these pictures are, after all, a celebration of achievement. Most, like the gardens they represent, are quite modest in size and scope – unpretentious, affectionate, meticulous works, but celebrations nonetheless. It is this – the celebration of achievement – that forms the dominant theme of the exhibition.

You can see it very clearly in the second of the five sections into which the pictures have been divided – the group entitled 'The Early Colony – Fences and Borders'. Fences, good, strong, straight, new fences, are, as the title of the section suggests, much in evidence – much more so than in the first section 'Precursors – English Villages and Gardens', where, apart from the wall shown in Barrington's watercolour of Hampton Court, enclosing barriers are either absent or falling over. I'm not saying that English, as opposed to Tasmanian gardens, needed no protection. I could hardly imagine that, since, when I was about eleven, I left our back garden gate open and went out for a drive with my parents. When we came home there was a cow looking over the front hedge and, soon it was discovered, a whole herd laying waste the back garden. The point I want to make here has nothing to do with the terrible scene that followed. It is concerned instead with the hedge in which that guiltily yawning gate was set. This was a hawthorn hedge with elm trees rising from it, something very common at that time in rural areas of southern England, something which seemed to have been there always, a natural, unremarkable element in the landscape. But in Australia, in the early years of European settlement, there were, of course, no hedges of this or any other kind. Any barrier needed, say, to keep the cows out of the vegetable garden, had to be made and imposed on the land. The neat, straight fence that Simpkinson de Wesselow shows us from his hilltop in 'O'Briens' bridge on the Derwent, Van Diemen's Land 1847', or the fence that Henry Gritten seems determined to bring to our notice in his painting of New Town Road, are in themselves achievements, the results of long hard digging, sawing and hammering. They are also, of course, important in denoting ownership, the achievement of claiming one's own slice of what was then seen as terra nullius, and, so it must have seemed, the achievement of establishing an outpost of civilisation in a howling wilderness. That, at least, is how one settler, John Dunmore Lang, a churchman and parliamentarian from New South Wales, viewed the fenced areas that he saw as he sailed up the Derwent to Hobart in 1835:

All is wild and waste save where the hand
Of man, with long-continued toil and care
Has won a little spot of blooming land
From the vast cheerless forest here and there

This kind of celebration of achievement continues in the central section of the exhibition, 'Cottages and their Gardens', where we see a range of Australian houses, now



Peter Cripps

Conference organisers Ann Cripps and Fairie Nielsen admire the botanically inspired art works at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

with more firmly established gardens, evoking a more settled fondness. There are not many big names represented here. There are Margaret Preston, Simpkinson de Wesselow and a few other notable artists, but many of the painters are not well known or even outstandingly accomplished. Many are amateurs like Miss Palmer, who has painted her father's parsonage, or Philip Hoskin Gell, the surveyor, who made the tiny study of 'Streanshall'. But, for all that, the artists' attachment to the houses and gardens they depict, their celebration of homes – often their own or friends' – that they found memorable or dear, engages us. They say, it seems, 'A home has been achieved here, and a garden where I like to be'.

Rather strangely, the painting gets much bolder once the focus becomes more limited. Some of the strongest, most imaginative work belongs to the fourth section, 'Bringing the Garden Inside', where the flowers, once picked, take on a fierce life of their own. In this they are very different from, say, J Burdon's 'Tasmanian Wildflowers and Landscape'. In Burdon's painting, as in much of the final section, 'Gardening the Wilderness', the achievement celebrated seems to consist of taming the wild, rather than evoking the wildness in the domesticated. Burdon 'tames' the bush by collecting and arranging an assortment of Tasmanian wildflowers so that they can all be known, named and catalogued. The landscape, meantime, is kept in the distance, reduced to a rather lumpy, smudgy version of the picturesque. And while most of the other vistas in 'Gardening the Wilderness' are far from lumpy or smudgy, this

same theme runs through them – the celebration of conquest over the wilderness by turning it into a backdrop, a charming scene to be viewed from a cultivated space where there are people, constructions and, of course, gardens. In these gardens the painter might sit and, with the gardener, civilise the wilderness by using it to create an ordered composition.

On occasions like this, I often try to discover what other significant events have taken place on the date in question. October 15 is reputedly the birthday of the Roman poet, Virgil, and the day on which, in 1783, a Frenchman called de Rozier made the first manned ascent in a balloon. It is also the date on which the young Queen Victoria proposed to Prince Albert, forced to take the initiative since the young prince could not presume to suggest marriage to the Queen of England. Victoria, it is said, considered Albert 'beautiful', admiring his 'delicate moustachios' and 'exquisite nose'. Fired by these attractions, she set modesty aside and spoke. The paintings and drawings in this exhibition, made for the most part by Victoria's loyal subjects, remind us how Australian gardeners, thrust like the Queen into unfamiliar circumstances, pressed on undeterred. In doing this they became the possessors of their own versions of the beautiful, the delicate and the exquisite, and, wedded to their gardens, delighted, as Victoria did, in the achievement of a special happiness. It is this achievement which we see celebrated in *From Village to Vase: The Art of the Cottage Garden*.

Margaret Scott



John Nash's picturesque cottages at Blaise Hamlet, on the outskirts of Bristol; see article on facing page

THE ENGLISH COTTAGE GARDEN

The English cottage garden is a clearly defined style recognised by garden designers and landscape architects all over the world. But what the cottage garden has become is very different from how it began.

Contrary to popular conceptions, the cottage garden has not evolved from the gardens of medieval rural peasantry. This group were the marginalised members of society at that time. They lived in rudimentary dwellings, typically little more than mud and thatch shelters, and often were as much of a commodity as the land they worked – buy an acre and get a peasant in the price. They rarely owned any land outright.

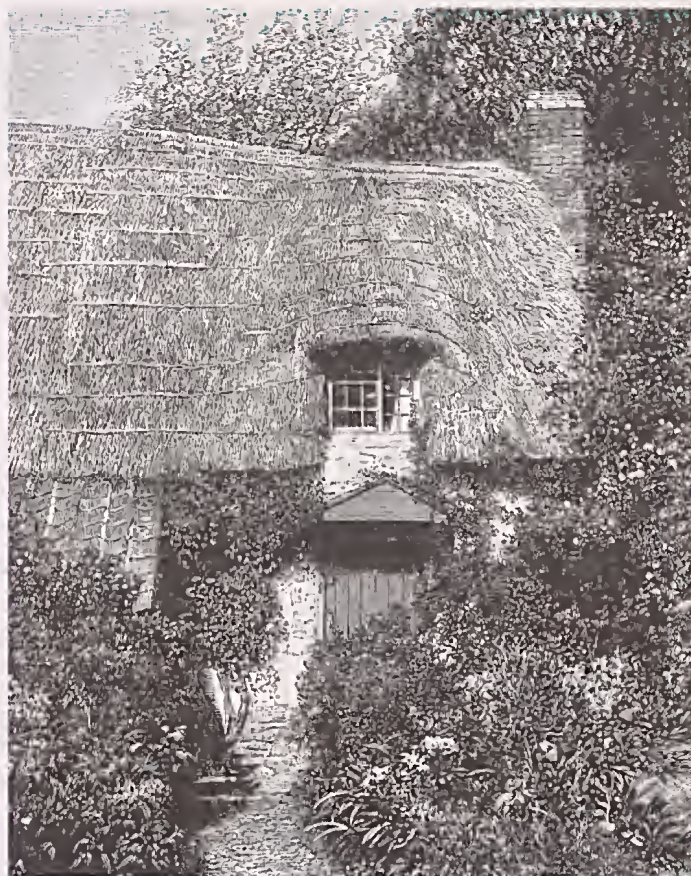
The true origins of the cottage garden are found further up the social ladder. The ‘husbandmen’, or small holding farmers and the skilled craftsmen and the artisans within the rural community were the ‘cottagers’ and their gardens were the precursors of what became recognised as the cottage garden. These relatively prosperous freemen were able to build more substantial dwellings, usually a house and barn. More often than not, they owned the land on which it stood.

To set their holdings apart from the common lot, the boundaries were demarcated with some form of fence or hedge, thus creating an enclosure where the wife – for early gardening was woman’s work – raised ‘wortes’ to feed the family, ‘mangels’ for the livestock, and flowers and herbs for ‘physick’. Probably the sole consideration when planting was function – everything had to have a purpose – and little thought was given to form.

Throughout the Elizabethan period there was a gradual improvement in prosperity, and the more substantial farmers increased their wealth and with it their social standing, until many were on a par with the land-owning gentry. Prosperity and stability encouraged both groups to improve their living conditions, and from the middle of the sixteenth century, garden design, riding on the back of architecture, became an art, and gardener a job description.

Tulips, hyacinths, anemones, crown imperials, lilac and mock orange arrived from the East where the gardens of the Ottoman Empire had reached a level of sophistication far beyond anything known in England

During this period the ornamental garden appeared. Flowers and herbs were grown for their decorative beauty in elaborate knot gardens, emblematic patterns worked in box hedging or decked out with polychromed railings and fanciful carved figures. At Cranborne Manor and at Hatfield House there are knot gardens typical of the period, reconstructed by Lady Salisbury who has done much to further our understanding of early gardens. A maze forms part of the design of the knot garden in front of the Elizabethan banqueting hall at Hatfield. Here the box-edged knots are filled with plants of the period, especially those introduced by the Tradescants who worked for the Cecil family.



A cottage garden in the west of England, illustrated in William Robinson's English Flower Garden (2nd ed, 1889)

Books like the *Gardener's Labyrinth* provided Lady Salisbury with historic examples. It was published in 1577 and illustrations included beds with board edging and the pergola.

Vegetables were consigned to a separate kitchen garden and fruit orchards were planted nearby. One of the earliest practical gardening books is *The Country House-wife's Garden* written by William Lawson and published in 1617. Lawson aimed his book at the cottager's wife. She was responsible for everything in the garden save the orchard, which was her husband's domain. Lawson set out the aesthetic reason for dividing vegetables and flowers when he wrote:

herbs are of two sorts, and therefore it is meet, that we have two Gardens; a garden for flowers and a Kitchin garden; or a Summer garden; not that we mean so perfect a distinction, that we mean the Garden for flowers should or can be without herbs good for the Kitchin, or the Kitchin-garden should want flowers, nor on the contrary; but for the most part they would be severed; first, because your Garden-flowers shall suffer some disgrace, if among them you intermingle Onions, Parsnips &c. Secondly, your Garden that is durable, must be of one form: but that which is your Kitchens use, must yield daily Roots, or other herbs, and suffer deformity. Thirdly, the herbs of both will not be both alike ready, at one time, either for gathering, or removing.

In this useful little book, Lawson also included patterns for several sorts of knots and a plan for a maze. Trellis-work and topiary were extremely popular as well, so it is safe to surmise that the cottage wife grew her flowers, things like marigolds, hollyhocks, sweet williams, lilies,

peonies, pinks, roses and columbines, in small formal beds, which probably were raised above the true level of the soil – to help improve drainage – the height retained by edging boards. Quite sensibly, herbs would have been stationed near the door, and there would have been separate areas for flowers and fruit that were grown for ‘stilling’ and preserving, stewing and physic.

In 1629, John Parkinson’s *Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus Terrestris* was published. This was essentially a herbal describing the various practical uses to which each of the plants could be put – function remained a consideration – and giving the common names and also illustrating any naturally occurring variations in plants that would have been especially interesting to keen gardeners as the variety of plant material at that time was so limited. But Parkinson also described the plants arriving from the New World. Such plants were too expensive for the common cottager but provided a challenge for the horticultural skills of the better off who could afford such luxuries.

From the Americas came marigolds and sunflowers, maize and potatoes, new strains of carrot (the greenery was worn as an ornament) and runner beans which were first grown as ornamental flowers only.

Tulips, hyacinths, anemones, crown imperials, lilac and mock orange arrived from the East where the gardens of the Ottoman Empire had reached a level of sophistication far beyond anything known in England. Individual nurserymen received recognition, Parkinson praised Master Ralph Tuggie of Westminster who specialised in carnations and auriculas. The Tradescants, who provided plants for James I and the Cecils at Hatfield House, were responsible for many New World introductions, and had a notable nursery at Lambeth. There were other fine nurseries at York and Oxford, and in Wales and Shropshire.

In 1667, John Worlidge wrote in his *Systema Horticulturae*, ‘scarce a cottage in most of the southern parts of England, but hath its proportional garden, so great a delight do most men take in it’.

during the eighteenth century, as the upper classes increasingly turned their gardening aspirations to landscape and design, the florists’ skills remained the prime focus of cottage gardeners

The term ‘cottager’ now embraced the farm worker as well as the farm owner and ornamental gardening was a practice common to both. The arrival of French and Flemish refugees in the mid sixteenth century had introduced English gardeners from all walks of life to some new plants and improved methods of cultivation. At about this time the term ‘florist’ came into use to signify someone who was adept at growing flowers specifically for perfection of form.

The refinements of horticultural practice encouraged the spread of florists’ societies and the number of florists’ flowers, so that by the closing years of the seventeenth century, the aristocracy, landed gentry, and town profes-

sionals and country cottagers alike vied within their social groups to produce the finest ‘florists flowers’ and carry off the prizes at ‘floral feasts’.

But during the eighteenth century, as the upper classes increasingly turned their gardening aspirations to landscape and design, the florists’ skills remained the prime focus of cottage gardeners. It was among this group that the movement really took hold, promoted by the appearance of popular horticultural journals. In 1848 the journal *Cottage Gardener* was first published.

Horticultural societies began to be formed – the Norfolk and Norwich being one of the first in 1829 – and as they grew in number and size, special classes were set aside for ‘cottager’s’ exhibitions, the organisers of which hoping most earnestly that the competitions would help to lift them out of ‘the degrading habits of sluggish pauperism’. Cottagers were held in pretty low esteem by their social peers, it would seem.

As I mentioned before, at the same time as florist societies were reaching their ascendancy, the fashion for ‘landscape’ was coming in, led by William Kent and Capability Brown. This trend had mixed effects on the cottage dweller. In their schemes to improve on nature by structuring the natural landscape to suit some image of an arcadian idyll, certain large landowners not only altered the course of rivers and stripped hillsides of ancient woodland, but also closed roads and razed villages and cottages, thereby displacing the population.

However, there were others who took a more enterprising course and created model villages to enhance the effect of ‘nature improved’. In the early years of the landscape movement, identical cottage dwellings with a small parcel of land were arranged on a linear plan – architecture was slow to drop its formality and follow in the informal footsteps of the landscape movement.

New Houghton in Norfolk is one of the earliest examples of this kind of inorganic village. The landowner, Robert Walpole, built two perfectly symmetrical rows of identical cottages lining the approach road to his park gates. Each pair of cottages is separated from its neighbour by a small yard with outhouses at the back. In these small enclosures the cottagers could, and still do, grow vegetables, herbs and flowers, with varying degrees of success.

Capability Brown and William Chambers designed Milton Abbas in Dorset, with cottages of varying forms, but formally aligned along a gently sloping street. But such building schemes while enhancing the visual condition of the settlement, did little to improve the living conditions of the cottage dwellers: at Milton Abbas each cottage was for four families, two up, two down. Gardening provisions for this sort of dense housing would have been slight if they existed at all.

In the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, with the publication of Sir Uvedale Price’s book, *An Essay on the Picturesque*, and the landscape design and architectural schemes of Humphrey Repton and later John Nash, a more natural and random placement of cottages, each possessed of its own design, came to be favoured.

Humphrey Repton’s earliest example is Gt Livermere near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, where he proposed that instead of knocking down the existing cottages, the inhabi-



Richard Aitken

Cottages at Blaise Hamlet showing their grouping around a central lawn evoking the feeling of a village green. Through an arrangement with the National Trust this delightful village is open to the public although the entrance is sufficiently difficult to locate that most residents are seldom troubled by sightseers

tants be encouraged to tidy up their patch and install uniform wooden palings and, 'by attention to the neatness of the front garden, make a picturesque scene'. He even saw room for improvement at his own cottage at Hare Street in Essex. As a selling aid for his practice, Repton prepared a Red Book, showing the before and after effects of his tidying-up proposals. The aimless beggars and villagers are kept at a distance by a dense hedge and sides of meat in the butcher's window are screened by a carefully placed plant tripod.

The finest example of a picturesque model village is Blaise Hamlet, the village of Blaise Castle near Bristol, where Humphrey Repton and later his son worked with John Nash to create a seemingly random grouping of cottages, each with different shapes and aspects, none facing onto its neighbour, supposedly to discourage gossiping over the front gate. The gardens were not exclusive to each property, but were meant to give an overall effect of a village green with cottages opening onto it.

In those ancient villages that survived the improving hand of the landscaper and architect, the traditional formats were preserved. The best examples of generic English country cottages were said to be those in the county of Hampshire. True cottage gardens were said to follow two basic types of plan. The first, like these estate cottages at Great Tew in Oxford, had the cottage set back from the road by only a shallow front garden which was screened by a boundary hedge, usually quickthorn. There would be a few traditional cottage flowers filling the

narrow space, and choice plants grew in window boxes or pots on the windowsills.

The second form had the cottage set well back from the road, with a central path leading to the front door. This was bordered by narrow flower beds with vegetables grown in neat rows in beds behind each border – enough vegetables were grown to feed the family, their chickens and house pig – the livestock providing muck for the garden and protein in the family diet. There would have been either flower beds under the windows or window-boxes. There might have been a yew arbor shading a wooden seat, and vine and honeysuckle were typically trained against the walls and over pergolas as in this garden in cottage-rich Hampshire.

However, such idyllic rural dwellings were not the norm, and poverty, ignorance and squalor were the lot of many cottage dwellers. Myles Burkett Foster was one of the earliest cottage garden painters and had a seminal effect on the public perception of cottage gardens. Foster was known for the truth of his portrayals. Rows of odoriferous cabbages and tumbledown outhouses were common. During the mid nineteenth century, scenes like this were all too common in the countryside and began to prick the consciences of the upper and middle classes and fed a burgeoning philanthropic movement dedicated to improving the lot of the rural poor.

At the forefront of this movement was John Claudius Loudon whose *Gardener's Magazine*, started in 1826, promoted every kind of gardening. His campaigning encour-

aged landlords to take their tenants in hand and provide them with plants and know how, dispensed most often by the estate's head gardener who frequently had charge of the cottagers' gardens, to make their gardens profitable and uplifting; it was not pure altruism that motivated the landlords, and there was a highly moralistic and patronising tone to their charity.

Loudon's opinions were widely respected and he was one of the earliest promoters of the return to the 'ancient style of geometric gardening' allied with a style of planting Loudon christened 'gardenesque' – the arrangement of exotic plants in an orderly garden scheme so that each plant was displayed in its perfection. This ultimately matured into carpet bedding, which was all the rage with the gardening cognoscenti at the height of the Victorian period.

By 1860, Queen Victoria was half way through her reign, Empire with a capital 'E' was transcendent, and trickle down prosperity had raised the cottage garden to its zenith. But, from that point onward, the lot of the cottage dweller began a downward spiral due to industrialisation and the accompanying population shift from rural agrarian to urban factory worker.

Cottages and gardens fell derelict and among many of those traditional cottages that remained in relative prosperity, the bedding craze began to manifest itself, as cottagers began to aspire to the, as they perceived it, sophisticated example of their gardening peers. Half-hardy plants, arriving from the far reaches of the Empire, were planted out in rigid geometric patterns. Books were written directing gardeners in the use of colour according to the principles of 'massing' where blocks of strongly contrasting colour were played off one against the other. In those days, colour harmony meant combining colours that were opposites in the colour spectrum, a far cry from the random deshabille of the old style cottage gardens.

It was not long before the pendulum of garden fashion swung back again. As a reaction against the grandiose fabric of the high Victorian garden, with its miles of stone balustrading, imported statuary and the extravagance of carpet bedding, the next generation of garden design pundits began to look back to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for their models.

They were especially keen on the gardens of renaissance Italy, like the Villa Lante, and the charming intimacy of their formal plan, which was constructed with clipped box and yew hedges, arbours and pergolas. And they turned to the 'olde worlde' cottage garden as a source of 'authentic' plants and planting. Parkinson's *Paradisus* once again provided plant lists, and books were published promoting the pleasure of the old world garden.

The romantic ideal of the 'old-fashioned garden' was most strongly espoused by the architects and garden designers of the Arts and Crafts movement, established as a reaction against the industrialisation of Victorian/Edwardian England. One perspective drawing for a garden plan had pronounced echoes of Villa Lante. It was from *Garden Craft Old and New* by John Dando Sedding. Published in 1891, he said, 'It is a common mistake to seek rare flowers, when many of the old and most ordinary varieties are far more beautiful'.

He and numerous other authors clearly saw in the cottage garden a perfect allegory for simpler and more aes-

thetic times. Nonetheless, their proposals were perceived as arguments for bedding by William Robinson who launched a fusillade of viperish criticism against the geometric formalism of the old-style garden as promoted by Sedding and Reginald Blomfield, championing instead his ideal, the natural garden. Robinson proclaimed that the secret of a cottage garden's charm was its lack of 'pretentious plan' and extolled its virtues, writing, 'among the things made by man, nothing is prettier than an English cottage garden, and they often teach lessons that great gardeners should learn'.

Gertrude Jekyll finally felt compelled to arbitrate in the debate between Robinson and the new formalists, pronouncing that Robinson's natural style of gardening could do with a spot of tanning by the Sedding and Blomfield's formal plan. She was a formidable practitioner of this technique and a devotee of cottage culture. *Old West Surrey* is her eulogy of rural England and in it she wrote, 'Cottage folk are great lovers of flowers and their charming little gardens in villages and by the roadside are some of the most delightful incidents of road-travel in our southern counties.'

Artists and illustrators soon entered the lists and the 'cottage garden' genre of English painting was created. Myles Burkitt Foster, the realist we saw earlier, and Helen Allingham were leading lights of the Witley, Surrey school of cottage garden painting. 'In a Warwickshire Byway' is by Henry John Sylvester Stannard, who painted many Cotswold scenes; an area of Gloucestershire that was the Arts and Crafts stronghold. His sister Lilian was one of the most famous and 'A Cottage Garden' is typical of her work. She also illustrated many gardening books. Arthur Claude Strachen, one of the most prolific, worked mostly in the Midlands and a well known work is 'Girl with Dog Outside Cottage'.

These artists and others provided highly romanticised visual images of traditional cottage gardens idealising the rural cottager's life and circumstances at a time when the cloud of agricultural depression was just lifting. This popularisation of cottage gardening led to it becoming the fashionable style and by the 1880s the distinction between a farm labourer's cottage garden and the garden of a small country house was hard to discern. The middle classes adopted the cottage style garden, not just to follow the fashion, but because it also allowed them to express their aesthetic values while not putting too great a strain on finances, since it did not require the expensive, hard landscaping, heated glasshouses and teams of gardeners which were the mainstays of more exotically planted gardens.

'Runwood Court' by Helen Allingham, 'Lavington, Sussex' by James Matthews and 'October, Abbotswood' by Beatrice Parsons are three examples of the cottage garden come to the manor.

Eventually the fusion of the informal 'cottage garden' style of planting within the old-fashioned 'formal' plan of garden layout became accepted as the most tasteful garden style by gardeners whatever their social standing.

In 1908, E T Cook wrote in his book *Gardens of England*, which was illustrated by Beatrice Parsons, 'Nothing nowadays is more characteristic as we know, of our English countryside, and there is nothing that strikes a foreigner more forcibly, than the cottage gardens, with



A cottage garden at Maltingley, near Winchfield, Hampshire, illustrated in William Robinson's English Flower Garden (2nd ed, 1889)

their aspect of homely comfort and even luxury, which everywhere fringe our roadsides and village lanes with broidery flowers.'

The style was adopted by garden makers like Norah Lindsay at her garden at Sutton Courtney. She in turn influenced country-house garden makers like the American expatriate, Lawrence Johnston, at Hidcote Manor. From 1907, he created a series of hedge-enclosed rooms, each planted to a theme like the red borders on the main axis, dotted with topiary, shaded by vine-covered trellis, bristling with old-fashioned roses, and countless cottage garden flowers, all massed in bold drifts of gentle colour gradations or as single colour-themed borders.

Early in her gardening life, Vita Sackville-West had taken advice from Norah Lindsay and had been inspired by Hidcote when making Sissinghurst. The Cottage Garden and the White Garden are obviously related to the gardens at Hidcote. These two gardens are recognised as having had enormous influence on twentieth century garden design, and were responsible for setting the seal of good taste on what has come to be recognised as the English cottage garden style.

Traditional cottage gardens, where flower borders line the path and vegetables grow in neat rows, do still exist, but cottage style gardens pop up in all sorts of surprising places. In France at Varengeville-sur-Mer, Normandy, Constance Kargere has made a cottage garden. Her family has Anglo-mania, her grandfather commissioned Edwin Lutyens to build Bois des Moutiers (and another house in the Cote d'Azur) and in the acre attached to her house, she has planted a series of garden rooms. The division of the garden into separate areas means she can manage the

garden without help, working on one area at a time. Her planting, like that of her neighbour Mark Brownis, is colour led. Mark is an English man who has grafted the English cottage style onto a French farmhouse, relying on self-sown seedlings, on grasses, wildflowers and choice garden cultivars to soften a formal plan.

Rosemoor, the latest addition to the RHS outposts, has recently opened its cottage garden, which they describe as 'based on a rural tradition of luxuriant, informal planting with the emphasis on colour and scented flowers. The focal point is a summerhouse built in traditional West Country wattle and daub over an oak frame. A glorious mixture of classical cottage garden plants provides colour and interest throughout the year and there is also a wide range of vegetables and fruit including old varieties of West country apples.'

Perhaps the most unusual sighting of a cottage garden is the one found at Highgrove. The Prince of Wales has made a garden of many parts, including a cottage garden area. It is screened from the main part of the garden by a castellated yew hedge. HRH asked Rosemary Verey to design a garden with winding paths and flowers to be at their best throughout the summer. This homey part of the garden lies between the formal Thyme walk and the swimming pool.

Arbours mark the entrance and exit to the garden, there are rustic work seats, and a profusion of pale-coloured cottage flowers.

So the cottage garden has come of age, finding its place in the garden schemes and affections of gardeners all over the world.

Elbne Clarke

HERBS IN THE COTTAGE GARDEN

Herbs were part and parcel of everyone's life long before people started showing an interest in gardening as such. From earliest times herbs wildcrafted from the surrounding countryside were used for food, flavouring, clothing, medicine, perfume, a protection against evil, a way of communicating with the gods and spirits in which people believed and much more. They were an integral part of people's existence at all levels of the social scale, so it is not surprising to find that they became an integral part of the cottage garden as it developed from the humble survival garden to the more skillfully cultivated gardens of later years which focussed on beauty rather than utility. But while herbs have always been an important part of the cottage garden, their role in that garden changed significantly down the centuries.

While cottage gardens progressed from the disorganised survival gardens of late medieval times to the more structured gardens of the seventeenth century and later, the role of herbs in the cottage garden remained largely unchanged for much of that time until the stabilising of the political situation and rising standard of living changed social conditions

The early cottager was someone with very little leisure time to worry about establishing a garden apart from the very basics he needed to survive. He was struggling to eke out an existence for himself and his family on a small plot of land just large enough for vegetables, some livestock – a few chickens or a pig – maybe a fruit tree and of course some herbs. Some herbs such as yarrow, meadowsweet and thyme grew naturally around his house, others he would have transplanted from further afield.

It is doubtful whether there would have been much rhyme nor reason to the planting as he wouldn't have had much time for creative gardening. His garden would have been quite disorderly with a small area kept for cultivating reliable cultivated vegetables such as cabbages and leeks and the rest in effect a wild garden where herbs, flowers, wild berries freely intermingled.

Most of what the cottager grew, he grew for a purpose – if what he grew had flowers which were attractive so much the better – but their reason for being there was their usefulness.

First and foremost they were medicines which could be used by the wife who was the family's healer. In fact it was probably she and not her husband, who would have transplanted the herbs from the wild so that they were available when she needed them. For serious illnesses she could perhaps call on the monastic healer if one were close, lady of the manor or more likely the community's wise woman

whose practical healing skills were often wrapped in a cloak of mysticism. There were physicians and surgeons being trained but they lived in the towns and cities and treated the court nobility or those in a position to pay. So mostly the cottage wife had to rely on her own knowledge handed down from her mother and grandmother, and the plants growing in her garden or close by.

If her husband cut himself with a rusty scythe, she could treat it with betony or perhaps a slice of horseradish. If a child had worms, she would give a tea of wormwood or tansy. For earache she would use chamomile and poppy. There were herbs to treat the all-too-common ailments such as muscular aches and pains, arthritis and rheumatism, digestive disorders and constipation, which was a major problem. Eye diseases caused by poor diet and an open hearth in smoke filled homes could be treated with borage, mallow or eyebright picked in the garden. For respiratory problems she could rely on horehound, rosemary, opium poppy, hollyhocks and thyme.

She may perhaps for good measure also recite verse with a mystical flavour based on Christian teachings or superstitious beliefs, but for the most part her success was based on the healing power of her herbs. If Christian teaching gave individual herbs greater power through association then it was all to the good – a garden containing Mary's Gold (marigolds), Lady's Mantle, Madonna Lily, Lungwort, Our Lady's Delight (heartsease) would have the best of both worlds when it came to curing illness.

What's more, because of the inherent power of so many herbs, they could protect against the harmful spirits which caused disease in the first place. So it was advantageous to grow them near the house, rub them on lintels or fireplaces, or even incorporate them into the structure of the building.

A large percentage of the plants known to have been grown in early cottage gardens were there for their value as medicines: plants such as garlic, ground ivy, elecampane, centaury, fennel, chamomile, thyme, mallow, pellitory, violets, parsley, costmary, southernwood, sage, hyssop, mint, rue and many more.

Herbs therefore were invaluable when it came to adding flavour and variety to the bland pottage or one-pot meal people survived on

Herbs were valued as seasonings. The diet for poor people consisted largely of vegetables such as turnips, cabbage, parsnips, beet, peas and suchlike with perhaps a piece of salt fish, salted pork or a rabbit poached from the local estate. Herbs therefore were invaluable when it came to adding flavour and variety to the bland pottage or one-pot meal people survived on. Herbs such as mallow, sorrel and lovage were pot-herbs to be eaten in large quantities, others were added more judiciously – thyme, fennel, garlic, savory, mint, rue...

It's worthwhile remembering also that Christianity was a powerful force from the Middle Ages onwards – if the

church said that you had to have a fast day once a week and go without meat during the whole of Lent, then you did so, and put up with the monotonous diet which was allowed. Fortunately herbs and spices were acceptable so a great range of culinary herbs could be and were used to good effect.

Tusser in the sixteenth century lists among the herbs, roots and seeds for use in the kitchen: avens, burnet, clary, cress, dock, marigold, pennyroyal, rosemary, parsley, primrose, violets, alexanders, purslane, mustard, sage, rocket, tarragon – many more again can be added to that list.

We often hear that the lady of the manor had a still room for preparing her remedies and preserving her excess crops for later use. Folklore surrounding potpourri composition tells how she put her fresh roses in a pot, layered them with salt, then buried the whole thing in the ground. Six months later she had the pot dug up and smashed to remove the fragrant rotten-pot (potpourri) which would be used to fumigate and deodorise her home. Unfortunately the early cottager didn't have such luxury and I doubt whether he or his wife had time to bother about potpourri – or could afford to waste a valuable pot for that matter.

But the cottager did use herbs for fragrance. Common herbs such as lavender, lady's bedstraw, sweet marjoram, gillyflowers, rosemary, sweet woodruff, wormwood and lad's love would be harvested and strewn across the floors to deter fleas and other pests, to help insulate against damp which affected the cottagers' joints, and generally help disguise some of the pungent smells of everyday life. Parkinson in his *Paradisi in Sole, Paradisus Terrestris* (Parkinson's Earthly Paradise) says of germander that it was 'much used as a strewing herb for houses, being pretty and sweet'.

Just think of the wonderful source of ready-made compost the cottager would have each time he replaced his strewing material!

The herb garden provided dyeing material to colour cloth woven, or later bought, by the cottager's wife. Angelica

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gave a bluish grey, bedstraw gave a red, weld gave a yellow, chamomile – gold, elderberry – purple, tansy – green, and so on. Later on, dyeing herbs became less important as dyed cloth became readily available and more people could afford to buy it, but the earlier cottager had to rely on what his garden would provide and that included dyes. Perhaps it also included the teasel, that thistle looking weed which can be seen throughout the roadsides in Tasmania. It had been used since antiquity to card wool and raise the nap on woollen materials. Where a cottager's wife spun her own wool and perhaps wove her own material, the teasel would be worth growing. Certainly she grew

soapwort for its cleansing power on woollen clothing.

So you can see that herbs of one sort or another were of utmost importance to the cottager and would be cared for as much as the vegetables and fruits which were also part of the garden. Many were multi-purpose. For example, violets were used as the basis of a remedy for coughs and sore throats, but were also added to salads; marigolds were used as a medicine as well as a seasoning. Box could be used to treat rheumatic aches and pains as well as the bites of mad dogs and the wood was useful for making weavers' shuttles, bobbins for lacework, spoons and other wooden items.

Many of course would be very beautiful (eg poppies, violets, clove pinks, monkshood, marigolds) and such beauty would not have gone unrecognised and was encouraged as time went on.

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While cottage gardens progressed from the disorganised survival gardens of late medieval times to the more structured gardens of the seventeenth century and later, the role of herbs in the cottage garden remained largely unchanged for much of that time until the stabilising of the political situation and rising standard of living changed social conditions.

The introduction of new foods from the New World added variety to the diet, resulting in less dependence on the wide range of culinary and pot herbs. A more scientific approach to medicine and new attitudes towards hygiene led to changes in medical treatment and greater access to professional medical help – herbs lost some of their importance in health care. Strewing became unfashionable. Later on the Industrial Revolution changed manufacturing practices and the established cultural ways.

Many herbs were still used for basic medical treatment – chamomile was still needed to help soothe a fevered child; feverfew could still be relied on to ease a headache; horehound was essential for respiratory disease. Others lost their appeal in favour of those that were being proven to be useful by a more modern scientifically-orientated herbalism. The foxglove fell from favour only to be later reinstated by the medical profession. Coltsfoot, once widely valued for coughs and respiratory disorders fell from favour as did eyebright, a specific for eye inflammation. Better hygiene and living standards brought a freedom from the constancy of the diseases prevalent in earlier times and a better chance of effectively treating

those that did occur.

Herbs were to remain important in the kitchen, but the more common ones – garlic, sage, parsley, savory, rosemary, marjoram, burnet, chives, thyme, bay, balm. Less common or flavoursome herbs were discarded as they were no longer needed for fillers.

Herbs with beautiful flowers or which were fragrant were welcome in the cottage garden and were encouraged to grow in profusion. Clove pinks, marigolds, hollyhocks, monkshood, goldenrod, lavender, honeysuckle, lady's mantle, gennander – all moved from the medicinal side of the garden to the ornamental. The more they were tended the more some of them developed, resulting in larger flowers and a tidier habit.

Herbs without beautiful flowers, or which had nothing to offer in the way of scent, disappeared altogether or survived in the cottage garden because of their ability to self-seed and turn up in unexpected places each year.

So you can see that the role of herbs in the cottage garden, from being quite stable in early centuries, did change significantly with the maturing of the cottage garden style which in itself had so much to do with the changing social conditions.

At the height of the cottage garden evolution in the nineteenth century, herbs were very much in evidence in the cottage garden, some used in cooking, some in medicine.

A great many were there because of their beauty. Their role had evolved from the stage where they had to be grown because their presence in the garden meant the well-being of the cottager and his family, to the stage where they were part and parcel of an aesthetically pleasing style useful in many respects but not necessarily as essential as earlier on. Their role in people's lives continued to change, independently of any role they had in the cottage garden, because of changes taking place in society as a whole, but those changes are outside the sphere of this talk so I won't go into it further.

Herbs are still grown as an important part of the modern version of the cottage garden. Many would not be recognised as herbs by cottage gardeners unaware of their past histories and relevance. Others are more familiar to people – mint, parsley, savory, thyme, sage, marjoram. Some would be used for flavour in food, some for use in craft activities which are often associated with cottage gardeners today, some maybe even as home remedies by those with an interest in herbal medicine.

Most however are included because of their traditional link with the cottage garden and the recognition that herbs – once useful in so many ways – were one of the cornerstones of the evolution of the cottage garden style which has once again become so popular.

Kim Fletcher

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

continued from back page

plan for part of Callan Park gardens. **TIME** 2pm. **BOOKINGS** essential, ph 747 3301 or 969 3043 **COST** \$5 includes refreshment **MEET** Main entrance in Balmain Road (opposite Cecily Street Lilyfield).

JUNE

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 14
Illustrated talk by Trisha Dixon on the Gardens and Plants of Edna Walling. **VENUE:** National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. **TIME:** 8.00 pm **BOOKINGS:** essential. **COST:** Members \$7; Guests \$10; Students \$5. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office: (03) 650 5043.

AUGUST

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Tuesday 9
Annual General Meeting. **VENUE:** National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. **TIME:** 7.30 pm

SEPTEMBER

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 11
Lecture and tour on Melbourne's Parks and Gardens –

Past and Future by Georgina Whitehead. **VENUE:** National Herbarium, Birdwood Avenue, South Yarra. **TIME:** 10.00 am. **COST:** Members \$10; Guests \$13; Students \$5. **BYO** lunch. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office (03) 650 5043.

OCTOBER

NATIONAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- Friday 21 to Monday 24
1994 National Conference 'A Changing Landscape' – A study of the Macedon Ranges. **VENUE:** Exhibition Building, Nicholson Street, Carlton.
- Monday 24
Post Conference Garden Tour

DECEMBER

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Monday 5
Christmas Party. **VENUE:** Williamstown Botanic Gardens.

THE AUSTRALIAN COTTAGE GARDEN

Cottage gardens often have particular associations. In childhood, I spent a lot of time at my grandmother's house at Tecoma in the Dandenongs. It was the dearest cottage set on a sloping triangular block, its base easing gently down a heavily timbered creek bank with the 'front garden' wedged into the apex. The gateway in the privet hedge was framed by a wooden pergola covered in a Wichuraiana Rose. On the woven wire gate was a brass name plate which humbly stated that this was 'The Nest'. We children thought it great fun when grandmother took in a boarder called Miss Crow and so she became Miss Crow, The Nest, Gums Avenue.

How we loved that garden with its numerous plum trees, paths edged in field stones, masses of bulbs, banks of Hydrangeas, ferns in the shadowy corners and honeysuckle on the old weatherboard outhouse.

While the cottage garden in Australia has evolved over two hundred years and been subject to various influences, there remains an identifiable tradition. The smaller private dwelling on its own portion of land became an essential element in the social fabric of the Australian colonies. To this day, Australians generally hold to the ideal of a 'block' of freehold land upon which they can tend a garden or simply feel they can relax in their own space. All kinds of people lived in cottages in the early decades of European settlement including those who later built substantial resi-

Right: An old, drought tolerant Agave americana resides beneath a spreading Monterey Pine at the front of Murray's cottage, in the gold rush town of Hill End, NSW

Below: A thriving specimen of Honeysuckle (Lonicera fragrantissima) in a cottage garden at Hill End, NSW



David Beaver



David Beaver

dences. Cottage dwellings were invariably given an area of ground protected by a stout fence of pickets or palings or in some cases of stone. Vegetables, vines, fruit trees and some herbs were an essential inclusion with flowers planted mostly for sentiment and generally tended by the female members of the family. The need for shelter was also answered through the use of trees, shrubs and various climbing plants.

Many of the areas opened up for settlement offered conditions for plant growth ranging from good to excellent. Some plants familiar in Old World gardens proved difficult in the Antipodes, however, many others thrived. The humble geranium flourished in most regions as did the various daisies. Fruits such as peaches, plums and apricots were notably abundant. An Australian cottage garden, from examples close to the English model to evolved Australian variations, could be as fruitful and floriferous as any at 'home'. Harsh winters were a problem in some areas but in most cases hot summers and a shortage of water provided the greatest constraint.

In social terms it is important to note that the increasing acceptance of gardening as a valid pastime for all classes was also an important positive force in the colonial era. Moralists championed the well-kept cottage and garden as an essential element in a well-ordered society. The idealised image of the romantic cottage garden was seen in various publications and popular prints, and by the end of last century was widely celebrated. Changing conditions in literacy, new printing technology, access to libraries, reticulated water, fertilisers, cheap seeds and garden guides all helped advance the popularity of the cottage garden.

An Australian cottage garden, from examples close to the English model to evolved Australian variations, could be as fruitful and floriferous as any at 'home'

Plants not purchased from nurserymen or grown from commercial seeds were usually acquired through exchange between family or friends. Sara Midgley who lived at Yangery Grange at Koroit in Victoria wrote in her diary on 2 December 1856:

A few days ago William brought from Mrs Bostock's Garden several slips of holly and some slips of small roses which he got given.

On 22 July 1857 she wrote:

Mother, Eliza and I have been gardening today, the day has been very fine. William has been to Mrs Muirson's and got some Moss Rose cuttings which we have long wished for, he also got some slips of the Passion Flower, the Acacia [*Robinia?*], the Broom and the Cape Honeysuckle.

The entry for 27 July reads:

I went up to Mrs Anderson's this afternoon with some cuttings and bulbous roots, found them busy gardening, got some rose trees of Scarlet and Cabbage varieties, some Fuchsia cuttings and hollyhock and evening primrose plants back with me.¹

Australia's early cottage gardens are recorded in sketches and paintings and described in letters, diaries, journals and various publications. With outdoor photography gathering interest from the middle of last century, we have a wonderful record of both established gardens and of the gardens created by successive waves of settlers. We can identify some of the basic types beginning with the classic unsophisticated cottage garden, a happy mixture of the practical and the decorative. The sophisticated or self conscious approach to cottage gardening was evident in schemes carefully planned to give a particular impression. A third category was the cottage garden with formal design elements borrowed from larger schemes. Old photographs show us that even the smallest cottages of bark, slab, mud or rubble could have formal 'front' gardens, some designed as miniature parterres with complex patterns bordered in dianthus, box, thrift or materials such as stone or brick or even discarded bottles.

There were all kinds of structures to be found in cottage gardens from simple archways to rustic shade houses

In dry areas, drought-proof plants such as decorative cacti and succulents such as Sedums or Sempervivums were combined with hardy shrubs such as *Lonicera fragrantissima* or trees such as *Brachybiton polpuhuensis*, the Kurrajong. Culinary herbs were grown as were others for disinfectants, deodorants, or insect repellents. Some of these herbs were extremely drought tolerant and today we often see *Artemisia arborescens* on an old house site when little else remains.

There were all kinds of structures to be found in cottage gardens from simple archways to rustic shade houses. There were also tubs and pots, troughs and stone sinks, home-made ornaments, rustic seats, aviaries and miniature ponds. In modern times, the tradition continues with the use of concrete figures, fancy containers and even swans made from refashioned car tyres!

Australian cottage gardens have gone through various eras of influence in the twentieth century. In the 1920s when lawns bordered with brightly coloured ranks of annuals was the pervasive style, Edna Walling began a campaign to recapture the older traditions. She wrote in 1926 in favour of the border of herbaceous perennials: 'There are two things in which most gardens are deficient: low-growing shrubs and herbaceous perennials.' Her writings over thirty to forty years brought into renewed focus the classic old world cottage set in a garden of favourite cottage plants. Over the past decade, the latest revival of the cottage style has been influential in shaping gardens on every scale. If new fashions appear to influence gardens generally, we can be confident that the traditional cottage styles will continue to find a place.

Peter Cuffley

References

- 1 McCorkell, H A (ed) *The Diaries of Sarah Midgley and Richard Skilbeck*, Cassell Australia, 1967

THE EDUCATION OF (ANOTHER!) GARDENER

I think it was Russell Page (or some other garden design pundit) who said that if you had beautiful views you needn't bother making a garden, since the two would only compete with each other. This always seemed like a silly remark to me; I prefer Alberti's Renaissance dictum, that the view should be framed by a 'delicacy of gardens'. Now that I've been to Tasmania, however, I can quite understand what Page meant. If I had serious landscape like that to deal with, I think I'd just park my deckchair in the shade and relinquish any thought of ever making a garden that could begin to compete. Along the road to Bothwell, we drove past a regenerating forest of eucalypts, the rosy russet pink new growth underpinned by the pewter shades of mature foliage and the buttery lemon froth of wattle. And then there were the man ferns, pandani groves and tussocks of pineapple grass, tea-tree and other assorted goodies at Mt Field.

Perhaps that is why I found the native gardens so fascinating. In Tasmania Lindsay Campbell has a garden on a mountain side at the end of a snaky dirt track, which given the odds on bush fire is kind of a spooky place to build a house. But the view from his terrace is stupendous, so you can understand his choice of site. According to him, the native garden he has planted around the house has protective value as well as aesthetic. When Lindsay says he excludes exotics, that means he bars mainland natives too. Joanne Morris also gardens on a hillside, in direct competition to the eye-popping vistas from the terrace of her Palm Beach house. She uses a broader palette of native plants, but like Lindsay, she also tip-prunes, cuts back and feeds selectively to get the plants to perform their best, which is apparently what you must do to avoid the grunge look that for so long characterised the bush garden.

All this is not to say that I did not enjoy the cottage gardens we saw on the conference. When Peter Cuffley showed us the picture of the little shack in a bush clearing, with its pebble edged beds and cottage flowers holding the front line against the alien and, for all they knew, life-threatening flora and fauna, I immediately understood the colonists' desperate need to surround their home with the familiar.

What caught my eye in the gardens we visited was their plan rather than the plants, because (let's face it) in England we have more herbaceous material than is good for us, but what we can't seem to do (*pace* Alan Bloom) is design good informal gardens. Perhaps this says something about the English character, but it probably has more to do with architectural styles and the landscape. Those parts of England that haven't been paved for motorways and shopping malls are chopped up into little hedged and fenced fields, and the houses, even the prettiest of cottages, are boxy. Set an informal plan against that lot and it simply jars, whereas in Australia, the best architecture seems to grow out of its surroundings; and in the garden, informal mixed beds of flower and shrub linked by winding paths merge effortlessly into the open expanses of the natural landscape.

As some of you will have discovered, I am from the United States, and although I've lived in England for twenty-five years, I still remember the big skies, the endless horizons, the deep shady porches, tidy small-town main streets, big bold city avenues and the easy openness



Ethne Clarke sharing gardener's stories with Mrs Nathy Hills of Hamilton

Peter Gripps

of life in the American midwest, where I grew up. So many of you asked me if I wasn't reminded of England by what I saw, and to a small degree I was, but I was much more aware of being once again in a young country that was finding its own style and its own voice, and where people were proud of what had been achieved and looking forward to what they had yet to do.

So here I sit in my snowbound Norfolk garden, remembering the beauty of the candlebark maples in Bob and Betty Lewis's garden near Bridgewater Falls, the bluebells and aquilegias in the woods at 'Dreamthorpe' where the Handburys are restoring the garden and house, the ferry boat ride across the harbour from Neutral Bay to the opera house, wombat cuddling, lamingtons, and the countless good times I had everywhere I went. I can hardly wait to come back: to see Kathy Barrington's garden (all those irises!), to visit Gay and Kaes Klok's Sandy Bay garden (now that's a town garden), to spend more time in the Hobart Botanical Garden, and especially to visit the Victoria Market in Melbourne with Helen Page.

In the meantime, I'll console myself by trying to grow kangaroo paws in my greenhouse, and saving up to purchase a sulphur-crested cockatoo. It's going to be a long winter.

Ethne Clarke



Richard Aitken

The picking garden at Government House, Hobart, evoking the feel of a cottage garden; Richard Aitken's AGHS conference paper on the history of the Government House garden will appear in a subsequent issue of this journal

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH

VICTORIAN BRANCH

• Thursday 17

An illustrated talk by Barry Moignard on the well-known Kelways Nursery, England, breeders of Paeony-roses and Irises, instrumental in establishing the Chelsea Flower Show, and plant exporter to Europe, including Monet's garden at Giverny. **VENUE:** Merton Hall, Anderson Street, South Yarra. **TIME:** 7.30 pm. **COST:** Members \$5; Guests \$7. **BOOKINGS:** essential. **ENQUIRIES:** National Office (03) 650 5043.

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/ SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

• Saturday 19

The day will take the form of a lecture by John Brookes, famous English landscape designer and author, followed by lunch and then visits to some interesting gardens in the district.

APRIL

VICTORIAN BRANCH

• Sunday 24

Tour of Nobelius Heritage Nursery, Lake Emerald Arboretum, and 'Glen Harrow', the J C Cole Nursery at Belgrave. Talks on these two early Victorian nurseries and inspection of remnant plantings and rare trees. **VENUE:** Nobelius Museum, Crichton Road, Emerald - Melway Ref: 127 G4. **TIME:** from 10.00 am. **COST:** Members \$10; Guests \$12 (includes morning tea), BYO lunch, self drive. **BOOKINGS:** essential. **ENQUIRIES:** John Hawker (03) 628 5477.

MAY

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

• Sunday 22

Please keep this day free for a picnic at Bundanon - famous property of Arthur and Yvonne Boyd given to the nation in 1993. The day will include an inspection of the garden and a conducted tour of the house and studio.

SYDNEY & NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

• Sunday 1

History walk of Rozelle Hospital garden (Callan Park and Broughton Hall), commentary by Colleen Morris, AGHS member, who has worked on a conservation

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